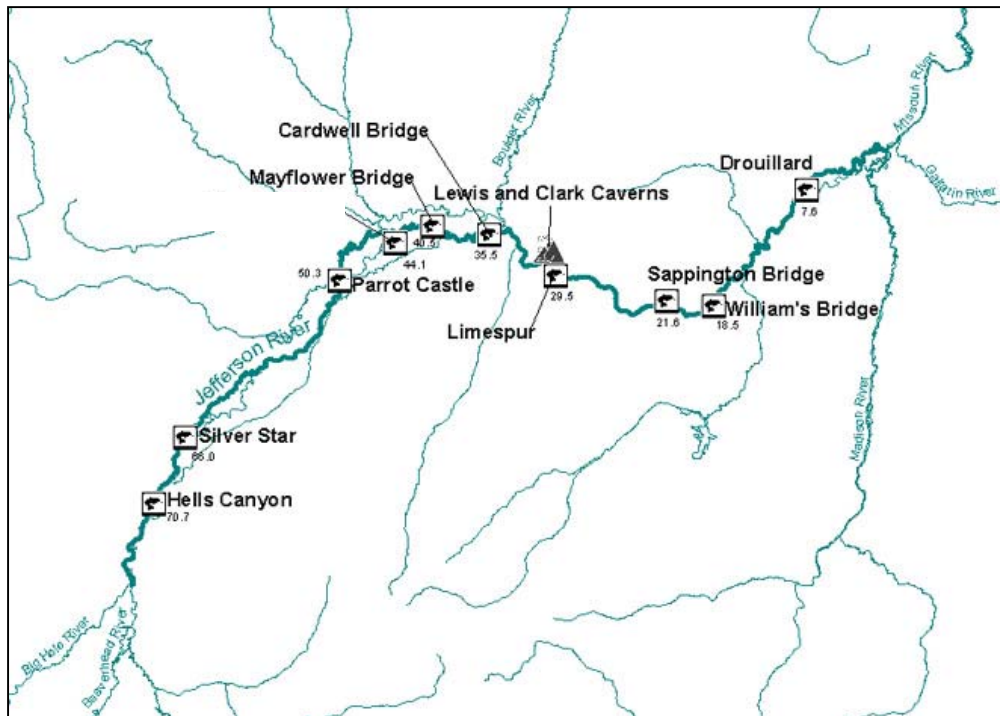


Draft Environmental Assessment

Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements



Map source:

August 2003



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements Draft Environmental Assessment MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 Checklist

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Construct gravel entry road, cul-de-sac, parking area, and concrete boat ramp; install road barriers, vault latrine, and signs.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 MCA, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished.
3. **Name of project:** Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: Fall 2003
Estimated Completion Date: Spring 2004
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 25%
6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):**
Kountz Bridge can be reached by traveling southeast about 3 miles of Whitehall on South Division Street, which becomes Kountz (county) Road. The site is in Madison County, Montana, Township 1 North, Range 4 West, Section 14 NWNE; site is 38.34 acres in size.
7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

| | <u>Acres</u> | | <u>Acres</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) Developed: | | (d) Floodplain | <u>0</u> |
| Residential | <u>0</u> | | |
| Industrial | <u>0</u> | (e) Productive: | |
| (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation | <u>0.75</u> | Irrigated cropland | <u>0</u> |
| | | Dry cropland | <u>0</u> |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas | <u>0.25</u> | Forestry | <u>0</u> |
| | | Rangeland | <u>0</u> |
| | | Other | <u>0</u> |

The project will alter approximately 0.75 acres total, which is in the Jefferson River riparian area, but is primarily open grasslands used for recreation since FWP purchase in 1988. The area is not mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Administration, and therefore, not considered a designated floodplain.

8. **Map/site plan:** Attach an original 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

Please refer to attached Location Map in Appendix A and the Site Plan in Appendix B.

9. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

(a) **Permits:** permits will be filed at least two weeks prior to project start.

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Permit</u> |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| FWP | 124 water quality protection permit |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | 404 fill permit |
| Montana Department of Environmental Quality | 318 short term turbidity permit |
| Madison County Sanitarian | sealed vault septic system permit |
| Madison County | Weed Permit |
| DNRC – Madison County | floodplain construction permit |

(b) **Funding:**

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Funding Amount</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fish, Wildlife & Parks | \$60,000 |
| Fishing Access Site Capital Account | |

(c) **Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Type of Responsibility</u> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) | Cultural Clearance |

10. **Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:**

The proposed project would include the following items to provide access to the Jefferson River at the Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site:

- approximately 560' x 20' gravel entrance road with cul-de-sac end;
- 7 gravel parking stalls for vehicles with trailers;
- 80' x 12' concrete boat ramp;
- vault latrine;
- rock road barriers;
- reclaim old two-track road; and
- signs: approach, site identification, regulations.

This site has been proposed for improvement several times in the past. An environmental assessment was prepared for the same project and a decision notice issued in April 1996, but funds were diverted from the project.



Photo taken from Kountz Bridge looking northwest at existing parking area in foreground, proposed features beyond. Sue Dalbey photo March 17, 2003.

Current access to this stretch of the Jefferson River consists of a small parking area on the upstream side of Kountz Bridge, adjacent to the county road. FWP would coordinate with Madison County to block the existing entrance and reclaim the parking area if the proposed project is completed. The bank here is heavily armored with rip-rap, allowing access only for small, hand-launched boats. The site has had chronic vandalism, including burned fences and off-road driving. The proposed project and increased agency presence associated with an improved site would help reduce these negative activities.

The proposed project would allow easier and safer access to the Jefferson River. The boat ramp would be located at the junction of the river and a slough outlet, where water velocities are relatively slow. The ramp would allow easy water access for hand-launched or trailered boats. The cul-de-sac design and parking spaces provided would allow efficient and convenient use of the site for vehicles pulling boat trailers. The proposed site would distance visitors from the county road and bridge. Signs and better visibility would provide safer entrance and egress from the county road. A latrine facility would improve the site sanitation and visitor amenities. Sanitation is an increasing concern as the number of recreational floaters are expected to increase during upcoming Lewis and Clark commemoration events and overall floating recreation trends incline state-wide.



Proposed boat ramp location at junction of slough outlet and Jefferson River main channel.
Sue Dalbey photo March 17, 2003.

Silver Star FAS is the closest site upstream providing boat access opportunities—this is nearly 20 miles above Kountz Bridge. The proposed improvements would provide the first boat ramp and sanitary facilities for floaters exiting the river. Kountz Bridge would also provide a favorable launching site for those wanting a shorter float downstream to Mayflower FAS (approximately three miles). The upper stretch of the river is heavily used, and the river is easily accessed below Kountz Bridge. This project would improve and expand access to the middle stretch of river; the project would help diversify and disperse use along the Jefferson River.

This stretch of river provides good fishing for rainbow trout and brown trout and a few burbot. Mountain whitefish are the most prevalent species. Rip-rap installed in about 1996 for about 100 yards above the bridge does hold many fish. FWP angler surveys in 2001 estimated 6,994 angler days on the Jefferson River; this number is less than half of average estimates due to drought conditions the last several years (compare to 17,346 angler days in 1999 and 13,600 angler days in 1997.)

This project has a very high priority in FWP Region Three in an effort to improve Jefferson River access for anglers and recreationists. Improvements at this site are a common request by local river users. A public meeting held in October 1995 in Whitehall, Montana regarding the proposal revealed no opposition (*Environmental Assessment and H.B.495 Document: Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site Road Construction and Bank Stabilization Project*, FWP, Fisheries Division, February 8, 1996). Trout Unlimited has designated the Jefferson River as a “Home River” and is

working to improve water flows and spawning habitat on the river. The Jefferson Watershed Council is also highly involved in improving the river conditions and supports improved access at Kountz Bridge.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Parks Division

Wildlife Division

Fisheries Division

Design & Construction Bureau

Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism

Montana Natural Heritage Program – Natural Resources Information System (NRIS)

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| 1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure? | | X | | | | 1a. |
| b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility? | | | X | | Yes | 1b. |
| c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features? | | X | | | | |
| d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake? | | | X | | Yes | 1c. |
| e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard? | | X | | | | 1e. |
| f. Other: | | | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The proposed new gravel road, parking area and boat ramp will not cause additional soil instability. These actions will be surface alterations, and will not alter the geologic substructure. The proposed boat ramp site will be located at the junction of the current river channel and the slough outlet where the river action would not vigorously erode the bank. The bank downstream of the boat ramp and the bank upstream on the opposite shoreline are heavily armored with riprap to channel the river under Kountz Bridge.

1b. Construction will result in disruption, compaction, and over-covering of about ¾ acre of grasslands and riparian areas with new gravel road. This site has been used for recreational purposes since FWP purchased the site in 1988, but about ten acres may have been used for agricultural purposes historically. The project would reduce unrestricted travel to the area and reclaim an equal distance of existing pioneered road and parking area near the bridge. Construction equipment and ground disturbance would be limited to the immediate area as per standard FWP contract agreements; all disturbed areas adjacent to the facilities would be seeded with a local grass mix.

1c. Unique geologic or physical features are not present within the construction area.

1d. Construction of the boat ramp would be the only shoreline modification in this project. The bank will be cut and sloped away from the river to provide adequate slope to launch a boat. Cable matt may be placed on the lower ramp to stabilize the ramp area. The ramp site was chosen and the proposed action designed by the FWP Design and Construction Engineering staff and reviewed by the Fisheries Biologist, and is not expected to modify the river channel or create additional erosion or deposition.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

A minor amount of siltation is expected temporarily during construction. Due to existing rip-rap at the boat ramp location, notable erosion is not anticipated. Temporary erosion controls are standard requirements during construction to reduce siltation and deposition. Sediment may be deposited on the ramp through river action and high water events, which would be removed as needed to allow access.

| 2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.) | | | X | | Yes | 2a. |
| b. Creation of objectionable odors? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally? | | X | | | | |
| d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants? | | X | | | | |
| e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge that will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.) | | X | | | | |
| f. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor and temporary amounts of dust are anticipated due to construction of roads and parking areas. Removal of vegetation surrounding the project will be minimized to limit dust. Areas around the new facilities that are disturbed by construction would be seeded after project completion to reduce future dust.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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| 3. WATER Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity? | | | X | | Yes | 3a. |
| b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff? | | | X | | Yes | 3b. |
| c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows? | | X | | | | 3c. |
| d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body? | | X | | | | |
| e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding? | | | X positive | | Yes | 3e. |
| f. Changes in the quality of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater? | | | X | | | 3h. |
| i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation? | | X | | | | |
| j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality? | | X | | | | |
| k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity? | | X | | | | |
| l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.) | | X | | | | See comment 3c. below |
| m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.) | | X | | | | |
| n. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. Alteration of the riverbank to construct a boat ramp will cause minor and temporary increases to turbidity levels. Equipment will not enter the water. Other construction impacts will be mitigated by use of temporary erosion controls, the use of Best Management Practices during construction and revegetation after construction. Dissolved oxygen and temperature levels are not expected to be notably impacted.

3b. Drainage volumes and rate would slightly increase from removing vegetation to construct the road and parking area and covering these areas with gravel. These impacts will be limited by the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), which FWP is a lead agency in developing and implementing. The use of gravel surfaces and BMP grading will preclude large amounts of runoff; surrounding vegetation will help disperse runoff prior to reaching the Jefferson River.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3c. A floodplain map was not available on the DNRC web page for this site. This is an undesignated floodplain. The proposed project has an overall low profile, which is unlikely to alter floodwaters. The Madison County Floodplain coordinator will be consulted prior to installing the sealed vault latrine, which is typically located 150' or more from a water body to reduce the risk of water contamination.

3e. The current access near the bridge presents a hazard to people attempting to hand launch boats due to the river velocity in this area and difficult access across the rip-rap shoreline. The proposed project would provide easy, safer access for hand launched vessels and larger boats via a concrete boat ramp. In addition, the new ramp location would be out of the main river channel, offering a safer launch site in slower water velocities where the slough enters the river.

3h. There is a very small risk of surface water contamination occurring from accidental petroleum product spills during the launching or loading of boats.

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*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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| 4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in? | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)? | | | X | | Yes | 4a. |
| b. Alteration of a plant community? | | | X | | Yes | 4b. |
| c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | X | | | | 4c. |
| d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land? | | X | | | | 4d. |
| e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds? | | | X | | Yes | 4e. |
| f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland? | | X | | | | |
| g. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of open grasslands and riparian land would be converted into road and parking at the new launch site. The entrance road, parking, and boat ramp would require removing a narrow band of willows (about 40') along the county road and along the riverbank, and a variety of grasses. The riparian area was altered in about 1996 when at least 100 yards of rip-rap was installed along the riverbank to confine the river channel under Kountz Bridge. The boat ramp would be located on the upper edge of this rip-rap stretch. The project location was selected in an effort to limit impacts to the vegetation; FWP makes a concerted effort during the design process to retain larger vegetation. FWP contracts require construction to be contained to the immediate area, thus limiting the impacts on surrounding vegetation. The existing parking pad and two-track road parallel to the shoreline would be scarified and seeded with local grass species to reclaim this riparian area.

4b. The riparian community would be altered somewhat by the new road; however, eliminating access to pioneered roads throughout the riparian zone and seeding these areas would allow them to revegetate. The new road and parking areas are located in open areas. Typically, FWP designs sites to retain larger vegetation, such as willows, to the greatest extent possible.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program searched their database for plant species of special concern and did not find any within a two-mile radius of the FAS (written communication March 20, 2003). No unique species are known to inhabit the site.

4d. About ten acres, or less than one-third of the site, may have been used for agricultural purposes historically; but since FWP acquired the site in 1988, it has been used for recreational purposes. The road and parking area will bisect this ten-acre area, reducing this grassland by about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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4e. Thistle, knapweed, and leafy spurge occur on the site. Areas disturbed by construction will be prone to the establishment of noxious weeds. All disturbed areas will be seeded with a local grass mix immediately after construction to reduce the possibility of weeds becoming established. FWP Region Three will monitor disturbed areas until adequate ground cover has returned, and regularly thereafter. Weeds will be removed in accordance with the revised Region Three Weed Management Plan and Madison County Weed Board, using mechanical, chemical, or biological methods.

| ** 5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat? | | | X | | Yes | 5a. |
| b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species? | | | X | | Yes | 5b. |
| c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species? | | | X | | Yes | 5c. |
| d. Introduction of new species into an area? | | X | | | | |
| e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals? | | X | | | | |
| f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | X | | | | 5f. |
| g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)? | | | X | | Yes | 5g. |
| h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.) | | X | | | | |
| i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.) | | X | | | | |
| j. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

FWP Fisheries Biologist Ron Spoon reviewed the plans and spoke with Sue Dalbey on May 5, 2003 about the fish species found in this reach of the Jefferson River. The primary game species here include brown trout and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, and lower numbers of burbot. Arctic grayling are not typically found in this reach of the Jefferson River. Non-game fish species frequently found in these waters include longnose suckers and white suckers, carp, longnose dace, along with other minnow species.

Spoon indicated that enhancing access to the river would increase human access to game fish species with few impacts to populations, and is a positive impact for anglers and recreationists. The inclusion of an access site in this location is important for boaters, and it coordinates with the fishing access site program concept of providing access within reasonable floating distances. The proposed access improvements would enhance

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recreational and angling opportunities for short trips launching at Kountz Bridge FAS, and longer, more secluded trips using Kountz Bridge FAS for takeout.

With proper design and construction of the new facilities, there would be little impact to the fisheries. The new ramp would be at a fairly stable location outside of the main river channel to limit erosion. In addition, existing rip-rap will minimize the effects of construction-induced sedimentation and turbidity.

The site provides habitat for white-tailed deer and a variety of non-game species including pheasant, killdeer, flickers, a variety of songbirds, raccoon, skunk, and smaller mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Sandhill cranes have been seen in the vicinity. A variety of waterfowl use the river during migration. The slough makes it difficult for people to access a large portion of the thick, woody vegetation on the FAS, thus 15-20 acres of protective habitat (or about half of the FAS) for game and non-game species would be largely undisturbed by human activities. Construction of the proposed facilities would displace small numbers of these common species during and after construction, due to the new facilities eliminating habitat and increased human disturbance. The river corridor contains similar habitat types up and downstream from Kountz Bridge. The lack of public river access upstream limits human activity for nearly 20 miles above Kountz Bridge.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database revealed no animals of special concern in the Kountz Bridge vicinity (written communication March 20, 2003).

5a. The proposed road and parking area would eliminate grassland habitat used by small mammals and bird species. The entrance road and boat ramp may require removing about 40 feet of willows growing adjacent to the county road and along the riverbank. These facilities would be located at gaps in growth or at the edge of the larger bank vegetation; therefore, removal of woody, protective habitat would be minimized. Installation of the 12-foot-wide concrete boat ramp is not expected to notably affect fish habitat.

5b. Human activity in this area would somewhat displace white-tailed deer, pheasants, and waterfowl. These species may adapt and continue to use the area at night and during periods of low human use. This would be a day-use-only FAS.

5c. A small number of non-game species would be removed or displaced due to the elimination of grassland habitat and human disturbance. Songbirds would be temporarily displaced during construction noise and activity, but would likely return after construction is complete. The low numbers of visitors expected at this site and the day-use-only designation would minimize the impacts to non-game species.

5f. No species of special concern are known to inhabit the site.

5g. Public use of the FAS will sporadically displace wildlife. The proposed project will directly impact about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre within about a ten-acre area consisting of grassland, and within the entire 38.34-acre site. The FAS consists of about 20 acres of dense, woody, riparian protective habitat for wildlife to seek shelter during periods of increased human activity. Much of this habitat is isolated from the proposed facilities by a slough, thus providing a buffer from the concentrated human activity area. Most visitors will be focused on the riverbanks to fish or launch boats, using areas of the FAS that are easy to access, rather than the dense undergrowth of willows where wildlife would seek cover.

Providing a boat access at Kountz Bridge may increase the waterfowl hunting in this stretch of the river, but it would not be expected to significantly impact the population of these species.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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Fisheries Biologist Ron Spoon affirmed that the installation of a boat ramp would slightly increase angler pressure and fish harvest; however, he does not foresee that it would result in a measurable loss to the fishery.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Increases in existing noise levels? | | | X | | | 6a. |
| b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property? | | X | | | | |
| d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation? | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. A minor increase in noise levels would occur during construction due to the use of large equipment, such as graders, dump trucks, loaders, etc. The construction will be over a quarter mile away from the nearest homes and 90 days will be allowed for construction to be completed.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area? | | | X Positive | | | 7a. |
| b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance? | | | X Positive | | | 7b. |
| c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action? | | X | | | | |
| d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences? | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. Existing access and parking at the FAS is small and unsafe in regard to traffic entering the county road adjacent to the bridge. River access is difficult even for hand-launched crafts. The FAS would continue to provide wildlife habitat, but also diversify and increase the land use by providing recreational opportunities and increased human use. Providing river access at this FAS increases the opportunity for people to use the land for hunting, fishing and water-based recreation. These activities bring economic benefits to surrounding communities when recreationists buy gas, food, lodging, and equipment for their activities.

7b. The Jefferson River is part of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, but this project will not conflict with that designation. The project would improve access to the river for visitors to better understand and experience attributes of the area that Lewis and Clark experienced in their expedition. Visitation is not expected to increase to such a large degree that the river ambiance would be impacted, nor the physical environment impacted to such a degree as to distract from the National Historic Trail significance.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to, oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other form of disruption? | | | X | | Yes | 8a. |
| b. Affect on an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard? | | X | | | | |
| d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a) | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The FWP Region Three Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated method of managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of weed controlling chemicals will be in compliance with application guidelines and will be administered by people trained in safe handling techniques to limit the possibility of an accidental spill. Weeds also could be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? | | | X | | Yes | 9a. |
| b. Alteration of the social structure of a community? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income? | | X | | | | |
| d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity? | | X | | | | |
| e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods? | | | X positive | | | 9e. |
| f. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9a. The existing parking area at the bridge would be eliminated, thus visitation would be relocated to the new site. Visitation is expected to slightly increase with an improved parking area and boat launch. A boat ramp at this site would disperse use on the river, alleviating possible crowding issues at sites up- and downstream. The increased traffic and visitation are not expected to significantly alter the site resources due to the hardening of the traffic areas and placement of rock barriers to limit off-road travel.

9e. The proposed project would improve traffic safety on the Kountz County Road due to the relocation of the site entrance and the installation of approach signs and site identification signs. These aspects would alert drivers of turning traffic and provide better visibility. Traffic patterns and safety will also improve within the site because of the cul-de-sac design and designated parking areas to prevent cars from getting blocked in the site and overall congestion. The proposed project will provide efficient ingress/egress, effective maneuvering space for launching boats, and adequate parking for all vehicles, including those with trailers.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify <i>recreational facilities, roads, or sewage disposal</i> . | | | X | | | 10a. |
| b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues? | | X | | | | |
| c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications? | | X | | | | |
| d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source? | | X | | | | |
| e. **Define projected revenue sources | | | | | | 10e. |
| f. **Define projected maintenance costs. | | | | | | 10f. |
| g. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. The new entrance road would require minimal grading every few years as needed. Additional traffic with trailers may slightly increase county road wear, and vehicles may use the gravel road between Kountz Bridge and Mayflower FAS more to shuttle vehicles to complete float trips. It is likely that silt will be deposited on the boat ramp and will need removing annually or biannually. Region Three State Parks maintenance staff would complete this maintenance. Site cleaning and light maintenance would be conducted by a FWP fishing access site caretaker. These maintenance actions are typical of fishing access sites in Region Three. Visitors are asked to pack out garbage.

A latrine will require additional maintenance at this site in the form of cleaning and paper supply. Vault pumping will be done under contract approximately one time annually or as use necessitates. Sanitation facilities are considered necessary to maintain a healthy site. The closest latrine provided at a public river access point upstream is Silver Star Fishing Access Site, nearly 20 miles from Kountz Bridge FAS. Cardwell Bridge Fishing Access Site, about eight miles, is the nearest public access downstream with latrines provided.

10e. No revenue will be collected at the site. Day-use fees are not currently charged at Fishing Access Sites. Approximately \$60,000 needed to complete the project will come from the Fishing Access Site Capital Account.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

Estimated Construction Costs

| Item | Estimated Cost |
|--|----------------|
| Road 560' of 20'-wide gravel road | \$11,500 |
| Parking 3840 sf gravel | \$3,840 |
| Concrete boat ramp 80' x 12' | \$24,000 |
| Vault toilet | \$6,000 |
| Barrier rocks 858 lf @ 6' oc 142 @ \$50 ea | \$7,083 |
| Signs: 4 two-post @ \$500 ea | \$2,000 |
| Sign: 1 single-post | \$150 |
| Subtotal | \$54,573 |
| Contingency 10% | \$5,427 |
| Total | \$60,000 |

10f. The FWP Region Three Fishing Access Site Maintenance Fund would supply the approximately \$1,000 needed annually for fencing, site cleaning, latrine supplies and pumping, litter removal, caretaker travel and activities, miscellaneous vandalism repair, boat ramp silt removal, weed control, and road grading as needed.

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.
- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| ** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view? | | | X | | Yes | 11a. |
| b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood? | | X | | | | |
| c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.) | | | X positive | | | 11c. |
| d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.) | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This rural area has large expanses of open space, farmland and typical river bottom vegetation, including large areas of dense willow thickets and mature cottonwoods along the river. Kountz Road is bordered by willows that would help block views of the open portion of the FAS where the new facilities would be constructed. Travelers on Kountz Bridge would be slightly above the site, allowing view of the new facilities. The closest neighbors would not see the new facilities due to surrounding vegetation.

Rip-rap sections over 100 yards long on either side of the river diminish the desolate setting of the river.

11a. Willow growth along Kountz Road and the river would partially shelter the new latrine from view of river and county road travelers, as well as neighbors. The latrine has a natural aggregate finish to help it blend with the environment. Other proposed improvements are of low elevation and not significantly noticeable. Existing roads will be reclaimed.

11c. The proposed improvements provide additional recreational opportunities for boaters and anglers by providing easy access to the river. The quality of these opportunities is increased by the ease of travel, access, and parking to reach the recreation destination. Please refer to Appendix D to review the Tourism Report from the Department of Commerce.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance? | | X | | | | 12a. |
| b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values? | | X | | | | |
| c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area? | | X | | | | |
| d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12a.) | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. A cultural resource inventory was conducted at this site, which concluded that the project will have a low likelihood of impacting any known cultural resources. The State Historic Preservation Office agreed with this conclusion, as seen in Appendix E with their stamp of concurrence.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

| 13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.) | | X | | | | |
| b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur? | | X | | | | |
| c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan? | | X | | | | |
| d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed? | | X | | | | |
| e. Generate substantial debate or controversy over the nature of the impacts that would be created? | | X | | | | 13e. |
| f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.) | | X | | | | |
| g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required. | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13e. This project has had strong support for at least eight years from FWP, statewide angler groups, and a local mix of anglers and stream protection agency representatives.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)

- 2. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken at this site, it will continue to degrade from vehicles using undesignated routes and unmonitored use at a primitive-type site. The site has value to bank anglers, waterfowl and deer hunters, and general recreationists, but boat access is nonexistent. A carry-in launch is difficult due to the bank steepness and difficult crossing of the rip-rap shoreline. The existing two-track road is fenced closed to reduce the unwanted travel on the unsurfaced road and indiscriminate travel within the FAS. The primitive road is unpassable when wet and is too near the water's edge for safety; it dead-ends with no turnaround area or parking area. This lack of site definition/design results in damage to vegetation and site degradation if vandalized and accessed by reckless vehicle users as in the past. Costs for this option would be limited to repairing vandalized fences and signs to continue to block the existing road. This could be completed by FWP Region Three Parks staff and budget.

Alternative B: Improve existing access and parking area; leave site as a walk-in area only; install signs.

This alternative would cut and fill to improve the existing entrance and parking area adjacent to the county road. A large area of willows would be impacted to enable cut and fill to enlarge the parking area for adequate gravel parking and turnaround space. Site approach signs and identification signs would be posted on the county road, and regulations signs posted within the site. Recreational floaters might increase with a better parking area; however, launching boats by hand would continue to be difficult over the rough, steep rip-rap bank. Angler use would likely continue at a limited level. Larger boats requiring trailers to launch access would not be able to access the river. On-site hunting for upland bird and waterfowl species and white-tailed deer may increase due to better parking and site identification as public land. This alternative would further inhibit use of pioneered roads on the FAS using rock barriers to limit vehicle travel beyond the designated parking area.

This alternative would have to be discussed and coordinated with the county, if approved, in that some of the parking would be in the county road right-of-way. Entrance and egress of vehicles onto the county road is not ideal due to the proximity of the bridge and visibility near a road curve. Installing approach signs 1000' from either side of the entrance and a double sided sign adjacent to the entrance would help alert drivers to turning and entering traffic.

This alternative would not improve river access for boaters. About 23 miles of river would remain basically inaccessible between Silver Star FAS and Mayflower FAS. Vandalism may decrease slightly with larger, more visible and maintained facilities. Sanitation is a concern to local river users; this alternative does not provide a latrine.

Alternative B would be completed by contracted services subject to the State of Montana and FWP bidding stipulations and design and construction standards. The FWP Design and Construction Bureau would oversee the project.

Alternative C: Improve existing access and two-track road, construct gravel cul-de-sac parking and concrete boat ramp, install signs; no latrine.

This alternative would provide the same features as the Preferred Alternative D; however, the existing two-track road along the riverbank would be improved, rather than create a new road. The parking area and boat ramp would be placed in the same location as the preferred plan, with minor changes to orient parking in relation to the entrance road. The road distance is similar to that proposed in Alternative D, but the location of this road is not ideal.

This road was pioneered from the existing access point by people trying to reach the interior of the site or perhaps during the placement of shoreline rip-rap in 1996. It is not the preferred location due to the proximity of the river, the outside curvature of the river, and potential for washout/flooding during high water. A large amount of riparian vegetation would be removed to widen and improve this section of road. FWP usually tries to enhance riverbank vegetation and riparian habitat, not remove it; riparian vegetation helps stabilize banks and provides habitat for a variety of species. In addition, there is additional risk that vehicles would plummet into the river if the road were located along the shoreline.

As discussed in Alternative B, above, county road entrance and egress would not improve with Alternative C. Visibility is poor when entering a road near a bridge, though approach signs would help reduce risks slightly.

There would be benefits to floaters and anglers and waterfowl hunters by providing a boat ramp at the site with adequate parking and easy turnaround facilities. A latrine would improve sanitation. Visitation would increase due to the improved facilities.

Alternative B would be completed by contracted services subject to the State of Montana and FWP bidding stipulations and design and construction standards. The FWP Design and Construction Bureau would oversee the project.

Preferred Alternative D: Proposed alternative to construct new gravel entrance, cul-de-sac, parking area, and concrete boat ramp; install road barriers, vault latrine, and signs

Design of the site as described provides river access for small and larger boats and spreads use along the river to limit boater conflicts. This is a desired floating distance from the ramp sites downstream and increases the feasibility for floating the upper 20 miles. The boat ramp location is expected to endure typical river flows for many years. The road reroute utilizes open land rather than heavily vegetated riparian areas. The cul-de-sac allows for easy ramp access and parking for vehicles with and without trailers. The old road and access site would be obliterated to improve riparian vegetation.

Relocation of the entrance to this point in the county road would improve safety for drivers entering and exiting the FAS due to longer sight distance and more gradual slope to the county road. Approach signs and site identification signs would further increase vehicle safety.

Visitation would increase, but due to the hardening of the site and road barriers, the environment would not be significantly impacted. Vehicle travel would be limited to the improved, designated roads.

This would be a contracted project as described above.

Other alternatives considered, but not discussed in detail.

Boat ramp location: due to the existing rip-rap, outward curvature on this stretch of the river, and water velocities, the only long-term boat ramp location is at the proposed site.

3. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency.

FWP engineering staff will oversee the completion of the project, thus the contractor will be held to the terms of the project, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area, and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation. The Madison County Sanitarian must approve installation of the sealed vault septic system (latrine).

Stipulations outlined in the 124 Stream Protection Act permit and project review by the FWP Fisheries Biologist will require the contractor to use erosion controls to limit siltation, deposition, or turbidity. FWP engineering staff designed this project using Best Management Practices, which will limit changes in surface water runoff or drainage patterns.

Noxious weeds will be monitored by FWP after completion and controlled in accordance with methods outlined in the revised Region Three Weed Management Plan and the Madison County Weed Board.

FWP designed the project to maintain critical vegetation for riparian wildlife habitat and yet provide a stable ramp and efficient site use. Existing roads and areas disturbed by construction would be reclaimed.

Increased river access will provide more angler pressure, but angler access is a goal of the fisheries division and not a detriment to the fisheries in this case.

Providing designated routes and limiting access to undesignated routes will help protect the site from the slight increase in human use at this site due to providing easy river access. In addition, traffic and safety increase by closing the existing unsafe routes.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The primary purpose for acquiring the Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site in 1988 was to provide river access. The proposed location for the new boat ramp is expected to withstand river flows for an extended period and provide a protected launching site out of the main current. The proposed road would provide easy launching and efficient internal traffic patterns and parking, while also eliminating indiscriminate use of undesignated routes in the riparian zone. The added latrine will aid in site sanitation.

Few impacts were identified in this evaluation, and all were minor. The entire project will result in a loss of only $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of open and riparian land, and will replace existing roads. The previous use area will be reclaimed and indiscriminant use of undesignated roads will be eliminated by barricading the old entrance and using rock barriers along the new road and parking areas. Other potential negative impacts identified, such as increased weeds and poor water quality during construction, are minor and temporary and can be mitigated through the use of common standard methods including implementation of the FWP Weed Management Plan and erosion controls.

No threatened or endangered species were identified in the immediate area. No unique cultural, geological, or physical features will be affected. Wetlands will not be impacted. The proposed improvements planned for this site will enhance the visitor's recreational opportunities, as well as protect the site from environmental deterioration.

Improving this FAS would also encourage use of stretches of the Jefferson River up- and downstream of Kountz Bridge, thus dispersing use.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

Based on the evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any, and given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this current EA, the proposed action, and alternatives:

- Two public notices in each of these papers: *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, *Whitehall Ledger*, and *Helena Independent Record*;
- One statewide press release; and
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page: <http://fwp.state.mt.us>.

Copies of this environmental assessment will be distributed to the neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed project.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

3. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., September 5, 2003 and can be mailed to the address below:

Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site Improvements
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or emailed to tgreason@montana.edu.

4. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Sue Dalbey | Tom Greason | Jerry Walker |
| Independent Contractor | FAS and Maint Coord | Region Three State Parks Mgr |
| Dalbey Resources | FWP | FWP |
| 926 North Lamborn Street | 1400 South 19 th Avenue | 1400 South 19 th Avenue |
| Helena, MT 59601 | Bozeman, MT 59718 | Bozeman, MT 59718 |
| 406-443-8058 | 406-994-6987 | 406-994-4042 |

APPENDICES

- A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
- B. Site Location Map
- C. Site Plan
- D. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce
- E. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office

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APPENDIX A
23-1-110 MCA
PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

Date: May 15, 2003

Person Reviewing: Sue Dalbey, consultant
Dalbey Resources

Project Location: Kountz Bridge Fishing Access Site can be reached by traveling southeast about 3 miles of Whitehall on South Division Street, which becomes Kountz (county) Road. The site is in Madison County, Montana, Township 1 North, Range 4 West, Section 14 NWNE; site is 38.34 acres in size.

Description of Proposed Work: Construct gravel entry road, cul-de-sac, parking area, and concrete boat ramp; install road barriers, vault latrine, and signs.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed development or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check ☒ all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- ☒ A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?
Comments: *About 600 feet of road will be constructed on open grassland and riparian land.*
- ☐ B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?
Comments: *No—one vault latrine.*
- ☒ C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?
Comments: *Grading of roads, parking, boat ramp, will require cut and fill of more than 20 c.y.*
- ☒ D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?
Comments: *New parking for seven vehicles with trailers will be constructed.*
- ☐ E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a double-wide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?
Comments: *No—one single-width boat ramp measuring 12' x 80'.*
- ☒ F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?
Comments: *One single-width boat ramp: 12' x 80' projecting into the Jefferson River.*
- ☐ G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?
Comments: *No—SHPO concurrence obtained.*

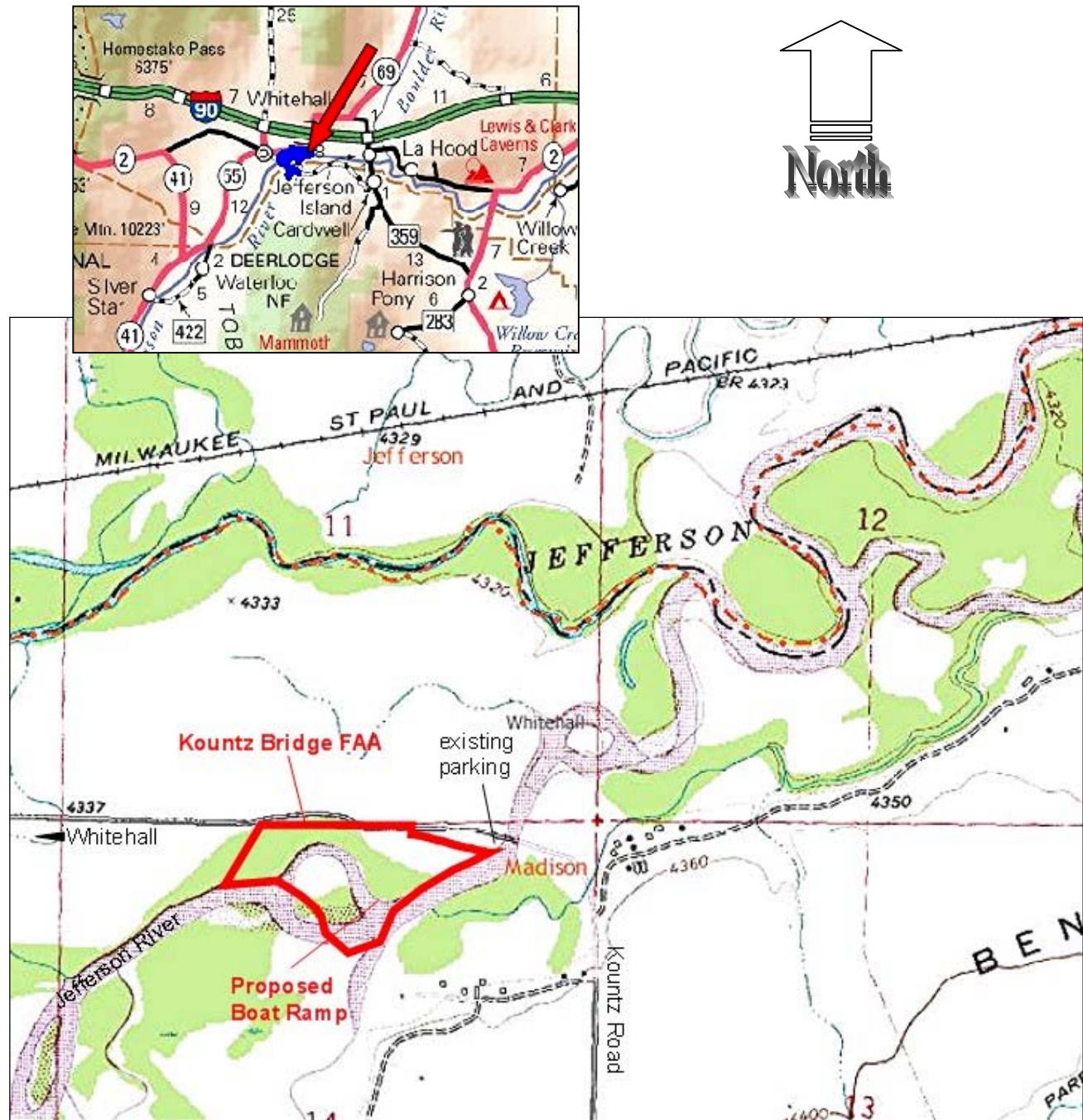
- [] H. Any new above ground utility lines?
Comments: *None.*
- [] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?
Comments: *No—this site is designated for day-use only.*
- [✓] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern; including effects of a series of individual projects?
Comments: *Existing use allows parking adjacent to county road near bridge and walk-in access only. The proposed improvements will provide parking within the FAS and boat ramp access to the Jefferson River. Signing and facility availability are expected to increase visitation at the site.*

If any of the above is checked, 23-1-110 MCA rules apply to this proposed work and should be documented on the MEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST. Refer to MEPA/HB495 Cross Reference Summary for further assistance.

APPENDIX B
SITE LOCATION MAP
KOUNTZ BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Madison County, T1N, R4W, Section 14 NWNE, 38.34 acres total.

Site boundaries shown are approximate.



Base map: USGS Whitehall Quadrangle

APPENDIX C
SITE PLAN
KOUNTZ BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS
Madison County, T1N, R4W, Section 14 NWNE, 38.34 acres total.

SEPARATE .PDF FILE

Double click on icon below to open file.

Note: you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer.



KOUNTZ site plan(1).pdf

APPENDIX D
TOURISM REPORT
KOUNTZ BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS

HARD COPY ONLY

APPENDIX E
CLEARANCE LETTER – STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICE
KOUNTZ BRIDGE FISHING ACCESS SITE IMPROVEMENTS